THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) to (c) Pakistan has prescribed a list of items which can be imported from India. The said list does not include sugar.

However, the Government of Pakistan had allowed, in the financial year 2000-01, import of sugar from India. It decided on 7.3.2001 to ban the import. It however, allowed import of sugar against Letters of Credit opened till 7.3.2001. Pakistan has been lifting/re-imposing ban on import of sugar from India to suit its interests.

During his talks with the President of Pakistan in Agra on 15.7.2001, it was proposed by the Prime Minister of India that a group of experts of both countries be constituted to recommend measures to increase bilateral trade and economic and technical interaction between the two countries.

Suspected nexus between Pakistan and North Korea

*273. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the United States of America has publicly expressed apprehension about the long suspected nexus between Pakistan nuclear establishments and North Korean Ballistic Missile Programme;

(b) whether the suspicion is that Pakistan may be funneling weapons technology to North Korea in return of North Korea's ballistic missile technology; and

(c) if so, what are Government's views in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Government has seen media reports quoting senior US officials expressing concern about Pakistan's nuclear programme that it was not under adequate export control, and that it could be spreading nuclear capabilities to other countries, including North Korea. The acquisition by Pakistan of ballistic missiles and

missile technology from North Korea has also been mentioned by these officials.

(c) These reports are not new to us; they confirm the validity of government's own assessments. Government has conveyed to its interlocutors our concern about the adverse effects on India's security from continuing nuclear and missile proliferation in Paklistan, despite the existence of various export control regimes and declarations of restraint by supplier countries.

Trade unions' opposition to amendments in Industrial Disputes and Contract Labour Acts

*274. SHRI C. O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that all the trade unions have opposed the amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act and the Contract Labour Act until the report of the Second Labour Commission is received; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) and (b) The Trade Unions in the recently concluded meeting of the 37th Session of the ILC, were generally of the view that the Govt. may await the report of the Second National Commission on Labour before considering amendments to labour laws.

Changes in labour laws such as Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, are made after discussions and consultations with the tripartite partners. Amendments to labour laws have been made from time to time as and when required, and is a continuous process.